



DANCING BEAUTY & GAMES

LADY CONSTANCE STEWART RICHARDSON

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DANCING, BEAUTY, AND GAMES



LADY CONSTANCE STEWART RICHARDSON

From a Photograph by the White Studios

DANCING, BEAUTY — AND GAMES

By

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III

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PHYSICAL CULTURE

TO try and write about Physical Culture without linking it on to Mental and Moral Culture would be of little use or interest, as these three cannot be divided and good come from them, any more than a tree can be separated from its bark and leaves and live. It is true that many have realised the great and undeniable truth that Physical Culture properly used is also mental culture, but it is also true that the masses are absolutely ignorant of this fact, and merely think that the person who believes so is a harmless lunatic. That it is within the means of the majority to have a powerful weapon to combat sins and vice that at

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present go rampantly on their way, I do most sincerely believe, and that weapon is a right understanding of the effect which Physical Culture has on the mind and body; and that ignorance of this weapon is almost universal amongst the masses is due to the fact that those who are at the head of things do not understand and will not listen to those who do, or take the time and trouble to find out the root of the evils which exist to such an enormous extent, especially throughout towns.

That this subject has been handled before by far more skilled writers than myself I know well, but in most of the articles on Physical Culture there is a great dislike to tackling the serious side of the question, and my excuse for doing so is that I have spent all my life or rather all my thinking life in enquiring into and trying to understand the effect Physical Culture has on the mind, and that this effect is tremendous no one who knows anything about the subject can doubt. The more artificial life becomes,

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the more necessary it is to fight the evils which arise from this artificial condition, and personally I am all for fighting artificiality with nature. Nature, if understood, seldom fails us. Many hundreds of thousands of pounds are spent annually on hospitals, homes for the feeble-minded, &c. ; if only a few of those thousands were expended in our schools, and in the proper teaching of the young, surely in a couple of generations a great many of the former institutions would be empty. And until it is understood that to help the human race towards real health, and the happiness that marches hand in hand with that health, it is necessary to attack and demolish the amazing system of wicked ignorance which has our young in its grip—both rich and poor—these institutions will be needed.

For long it has been the cry, give every one a fair chance, and I do most sincerely believe that it is possible to give that chance by turning out into the world self-respecting men and women mentally and physically

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developed in the manner that I believe God meant us all to be; and not maimed body and soul by the course of instruction we have been put through before we are thrown out on our own resources to struggle blindly through our lives as best we may in a semi-developed condition, mentally and physically: some of us perhaps to learn what a fine thing we could have made of life if only we had known and understood sooner. That moral feebleness allied to real vice is tremendously on the increase in large towns, cannot be denied; also that a great deal of it has its beginning in school-life is well known, just as it is realised by thinking people that very little effort is made either to enquire into the cause of it or find a remedy. It seems to be taken for granted that if a young boy or girl shows moral feebleness there is nothing much to be done except to hope that they will not be found out and disgraced. I know well that to cure immorality in the young once it has established itself, is difficult,

A GOOD POSE

From a Photograph by Andrew Paterson, Inverness



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though not by any means hopeless. Cures always are difficult and take time; therefore prevention is so much simpler: and certainly a great deal, if not all, of this immorality could be prevented if Physical Culture and its true effects on body and mind were understood, and the teaching of a right system was insisted on in all places where the young gather together.

Let me try and explain what I mean by a right system. It is not just a different way of exercising the arms, legs, and body. There are many most admirable methods of Physical Culture, composed and propounded by men who thoroughly understand the human body and its needs. But what I think is wanting in our teaching of the young when we teach them at all, is the giving of any reason as to why they should exercise regularly; beyond the rather feeble fact that they will most likely feel better if they do. Give children a true reason for doing anything and they will hold on to it throughout life, and the true

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reason for Physical Culture surely is that God has given you a body and a brain to develop to the best of your ability, and that when the time comes to render them back again to your Maker you will be able to do so with no sense of shame. Instil this into the young and it is wonderful how they understand and reverence the thought. To merely tell children that it is jolly to have big muscles and be stronger than their neighbours, will certainly urge them on for the moment, but these reasons have little strength or help in them if there is a temptation to be overcome, and to continue to use them is but building upon sand.

Children are born idealists, and surely it ought to be the duty of all to make those ideals higher and of a strength that will last through life. The only ideal that the average child has nowadays is 'how to get on,' and in the getting on if the other fellow goes to the wall no matter; the ideal of Physical and Mental culture ought

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to be of the highest and the greatest purity, and it is only possible to instil this into the very young. All chance of pure thinking as regards the body is generally entirely shattered by nurses and parents before a child reaches four or five years of age: its body is made a shameful thing to hide as much as possible and never to be referred to. If you want to feel real shame, and understand the impure manner in which the body is regarded, watch small children in any well-to-do nursery being washed by their nurses; instead of being taught that their body is a beautiful and sacred thing and one of God's greatest works, they are made to believe it is a shameful thing. Little harmless questions that all children ask and which ought to get straight, sensible answers, are greeted with giggles or winks, and the child is told not to ask naughty questions. Thus at the beginning of their lives is planted the little, creeping, insidious, dirty growth. All children will think about their bodies, it is right and natural that

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they should do so ; only those thoughts must be guided into pure, sensible channels, not left in black ignorance, except for the unclean hints dropped by many who, to our shame be it said, have children in their charge.

To instil pure-mindedness, a child from the moment it can understand must be taught to take a proper pride in its body, then when come to man or woman's full growth, a clean-minded, healthy, happy, human being will be the result, and during the always more or less difficult age before full growth is reached there need be little fear of the dangers and temptations which as a rule beset the young.

If from early youth it was explained and impressed on the young of both sexes, that it was a real sin against God to allow their minds to become a mass of sensuality, and that the mind becoming like this means that the body has been neglected, and the only right remedy for body and mind is proper exercise and a proper understanding

RORY DANCING

From a Photograph by Andrew Paterson



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of what to eat and what to avoid in eating and drinking, what a help it would be to them. As a rule this is never explained to the young, and surely its great importance ought to be understood at least by those who have children in their charge. The ordinary man or woman fighting the temptations which arise from the artificial conditions of life, are as helpless from their ignorance and neglect of the human body as a man naked fighting against one fully armed.

There are a certain number of men and women who are strong-minded enough to be able to take up physical exercises late in life and get a considerable amount of good from them, but with the majority unless the exercises are a habit from early youth, they find them a bore after the novelty has worn off, and they are eventually dropped altogether. It is a very great effort for a man or woman who has neglected any regular exercise all their lives, to get up in the morning and perform a certain set

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amount. But if a child is trained almost from infancy to do this, and made to understand that it is quite as dirty to neglect the body or to put dirty (otherwise unwholesome) food into it, as it is to walk about with unwashed teeth, they no more think of neglecting the care of the one than they do of the other. Therefore, personally, I always train my own children to exercise ten minutes every morning before their baths; not that it is a real necessity when living an open-air life, but that I feel the habit will go with them through life; also that the time may come when having to be in town it may prove of incalculable value. At present they would no more think of missing their exercises than they would their baths.

Again, I think great help against the bad and harmful habits of drinking and smoking can be given, if a child is taught that his body is a beautiful and precious trust, and that to soil and harm it by the accumulation of bad and artificial

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habits is to commit a real sin, and also shows a considerable lack of intelligence if commenced with open eyes and understanding. Also, if the explanation is given of how these habits grow and take hold, if once started, and how a liking for them becomes quickly ingrained, I am quite sure that boys and girls would no more make a habit of these harmful things than they would cheat at cards--as in one case you are behaving dishonourably to your fellow-men, in the other you are betraying a trust given into your hands by God ; surely the latter ought to be made of as much importance as the former. It is all very well to say that smoking and drinking in moderation harm no one ; perhaps not, but the difficulty of keeping them in moderation is very great, particularly when troubles come along, which even if they be mole-hills in reality, to the young are always mountains, and it seems somewhat foolish to learn and encourage an artificial habit which may at any time prove a most

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dangerous enemy, and is certainly not missed if never begun.

I also feel most strongly that it will be an impossibility to make Physical Culture what it ought to be until a radical change is made in present-day clothing for both sexes.

Revolutionise the clothing of children and all would be well, as if sanely clad during their growing years, they certainly would not submit in later life to the absurd garments worn by their parents.

I do not suggest that every one should go about in Greek tunics, as this garment is not very suitable to our grey climate; but there is a far cry between a Greek tunic and an Eton suit, for instance. That the garments children often have to wear are responsible for a great deal of immorality I am certain, and they are on the whole most insanitary, great carriers of germs, and intensely uncomfortable as well. There has certainly been a slight move for the better amongst some who have stopped

RORY, TORQUIL AND HAMISH

From a Photograph by Andrew Paterson



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their children wearing hats; thus giving them a chance to grow up without chronic headaches, and to have beautiful hair. Also a few now give their children a shoe that does not deform their feet as in the past, but even now it is very rarely that one sees a child over ten years of age with toes that are not crooked; for it does not seem to be realised the tremendous pace a child's foot grows between the ages of two and fifteen; therefore if only sandals were used for growing children such a lot of pain and expense might be saved; a sandal showing at once if it is too small, and also is much cheaper to replace than shoes, or those still greater iniquities, boots, which cramp the muscles of the legs and stop the ankle muscles from gaining growth and strength.

I know that many people will contend that the mental impurity I have spoken of is the exception and not the rule. I can but ask these people to spend an afternoon in the sculpture room at a museum or in

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a picture gallery, and watch the majority of those who come through and see the nudes in either marble or on canvas. Apart from a few serious art students there are generally two types, the one who passes by with averted head and downcast eyes, getting slightly red in doing so; these are generally men or women very religious from the world's point of view, and with sad, contracted minds. They pray, but at the same time they have made up their minds that one of God's most splendid works is a shameful thing to be covered up, neglected and forgotten as much as possible.

The other type is the man or woman who comes to stare and giggle, and nudge with coarse innuendo and joke. These are more awful than the others to watch, as they are alive with a horrible wakefulness coming from minds that are merely cesspools.

And with both types the same cause is at work in different ways. They cannot see a naked figure either in life, painting, or sculpture without bringing in the sex

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question. They can see no beauty, as it is obscured by the grime of their minds.

Surely a state of things to make one stand aghast with bent and shamed head.

I do not think I ever realised fully the extreme impurity that is rife through the minds particularly of those who live in towns until I went on to the stage, and took up classical dancing seriously. Then there used to pour in upon me a stream of letters of such a terrible kind that one wondered it were possible for any living being who had a soul to write such things, and in those days came to me a great and sincere wish to help on in any way possible the work of trying to establish a system of Physical and Mental Culture that should give the children their fair chance in life; for rich and poor there ought to be but one system, and that instilled in a manner to give to them a knowledge and reverent love of all that is God's work, to bring within the reach of all the chance to keep the body beautiful outwardly and clean

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inwardly, and to fill the mind with high ideals and a fine knowledge of men and books. May we all try and make it more possible and easier for the little children to walk with firm and unfaltering footsteps the path that ours have tottered so painfully along.

GAMES

AMES are nearly always regarded as recreation, though a few people take them seriously and work at them with a view to becoming professionals and earning a livelihood in this manner. When I say they are used as a recreation, this is applicable to those people who play different games in a desultory fashion during the whole or part of the year ; showing as time passes curiously little improvement in their play. Plodding continuously on, but from what point of view it is difficult to understand, unless it be from a purely animal liking of being in the open air and the pleasure they derive from following after, hitting, or kicking a ball. One cannot believe that they can get any pleasure from

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the competition arising in games, as they never strive to improve their play. Many I know have devoted several hours weekly for a long time to a game, but they play no better or very slightly better now than when they commenced.

If one remarks on the rather curious mental condition a person must be in to act like this, the reply generally is, 'Every one cannot play games well. A good eye is necessary,' &c. Certainly that is so, but a good eye is mostly training and practice like any other muscle control. Surely if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well, and I think that any one who gives the matter a few moments' thought will agree that it is extremely harmful physically and mentally to go on doing a thing in the wrong way year after year. It denotes lack of concentration, lack of self-control, and a general mental sloppiness. Curiously enough these people are always the ones who continually ask others to teach and help them to improve their play, but an endeavour to

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do so is nearly always greeted with a laugh, and, 'Oh, yes, I see,' and they go steadily on with the same faults as before, though quite often showing that with a little concentration and control they might have become admirable players. This class of game-player, I feel sure, has developed from the child who has been allowed to undertake its games and its work in a slipshod fashion, never being made to realise that if a game or a piece of work is taken up it should either be done well and completely or left alone. By this I naturally do not mean that all amateurs ought not to play a game unless they play it like a professional, but there is a very far cry between professionalism and the slipshod game-player. The next type of man who plays games is the one who does so purely from the health-giving point of view and not from any real love of games, doing so most likely only when he is a bit off colour, and in vulgar parlance, wishes to have a good sweat! A Turkish bath would have as good an effect,

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but he, like a good many others, cannot be bothered to seek after health unless his mind is stimulated and amused at the same time. He is not really of much interest from the game-playing point of view, as he enters into the world of games but little.

At the opposite extreme is to be found the man who takes games seriously, though this type is really divided into two classes ; one who plays games to keep fit, and the other who keeps fit to play games. The latter, of course, are the men with a real devotion to games who spend little time doing anything else ; at all events, during the season when their own particular game is to the fore. The questions I think one is inclined to ask oneself, when seriously thinking over games, are : in what spirit ought games to be taken ? Are they a waste of time or not ? and are they of real good mentally and physically to the player ? I have always personally felt that games, regarded as they are at the present day, are extremely bad, but if taken in a sane and sensible fashion

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ought to be of the greatest value. This is what I mean. Children when they start to play games are nearly always allowed to do so in a most haphazard manner ; for instance, a child who shows a strong fancy for games is often left to play them *ad lib.*, only being reproved if his school-work suffers, and often a lenient eye is turned on all shirking of work if the shirker is found to have used the time for game-playing. It is rarely explained to him or her that games ought to be regarded as a recreation and an aid to health, also that if played they ought to be played properly at proper times. Shirking your other work to play them or playing them badly is misusing both your body and mind, and generally hurting yourself physically and mentally.

Games must be looked at in their proper proportion and once finished with not allowed to usurp the mind, as a man who makes games his sole thought throughout life is a sad person to meet. If the child who was backward and rather stupid at

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games was taken a little trouble with and equally taught with his more forward brother that games are to be regarded educationally like any other physical exercise, I think that as grown men they would both be improved. On the one hand, you would not find the man who does not play games at all, from having been told when a child that he was no use ; and on the other, the man who eats, thinks, talks, and sleeps games: but two human beings with the good health, concentration, quickness, and self-control which games properly used certainly bring, all of which are most admirable qualities having a very great effect on a man's life in all and every profession. A man of the above qualities, added to a clean outdoor sense of things, is far more apt to make a success of his life from the higher point of view than the one without them. Equally this reacts on his children. The man of control and understanding will most assuredly see that his children are trained to have the same qualities.

GAMES

I do not think it can be repeated too often what great harm can be done to children, and, alas ! is done both physically and mentally, by allowing them to play games at all times and in any manner they please. It is quite time it was realised that during the period the brain and body are developing, enormous care ought to be taken in the supervision of all bodily exercises, for that their effect is very great on the brain only the ignorant will deny. A child left to exercise itself at games will as a rule play till it is dead beat, thus undoing any good that might come to it from the exercise of its muscles and mind, as long before it has got to this stage of tiredness it will have been hitting wrong, running wrong, and forcing the heart to overwork. Mentally it will be over-excited, the eye will be strained, and the temper out of control. One of the great advantages of games is the teaching of tolerance and self-control, but when a thing is young and tender it does not do to bear too heavily on it. Whereas judicious exercise

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strengthens a weak thing, heavy work will merely spoil it, and in all probability ruin it for all time. How often one sees a child burst into tears for no obvious reason, become irritable and bad-tempered, and when bedtime comes lie awake for hours. The cause nearly always being the ignorance of teachers and parents who in their mistaken kindness allow children to play games until they can hardly walk with fatigue. I have often been asked if I advocate games for children; before the ages of ten or eleven years old I certainly do not, and between those ages and sixteen, I think games ought to be most carefully supervised and chosen, and for these reasons. From infancy up to eleven years is a most critical period, the most critical I personally believe in the whole life. When a young child is playing games it is most difficult, in fact almost impossible, to get it to remember several things at once. What I mean is this. A young child at this period is merely learning everything, how to walk, how to

GAMES

run, and how to balance itself correctly. The meaning of perfect poise ought at this age to be installing itself into a child's mind; in the excitement of the game a child as a rule tries to do too much, with the result that in a short space of time it will be walking badly and heavily, and running in an ugly, uncertain fashion.

Then there are very few games which do not draw the body forward, contracting the chest, in consequence of which the breathing is restricted, which naturally renders the blood impure, this leading to a thousand troubles. Also I do not believe it is good or natural for any young undeveloped thing to be knocked about in the way that happens in a good many games, as the muscles and bones are soft and apt to be distorted easily. Children in a natural rough-and-tumble amongst themselves are no more likely to hurt themselves or each other than puppies or any other young animal at play, but bring in the competition and the unnatural excitement which creeps

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into games that after all are an artificial amusement, more harm than good is likely to result to children under sixteen years of age. After that age, regarded in their proper proportion, I think they are excellent. I am a firm believer for the young in individual athletic exercises such as running, jumping, throwing the hammer, the discus, swimming and dancing, &c., but under the eye always of an experienced person, as in these exercises it is possible to control and watch the work of each child, to see and teach that each muscle is developed in proper fashion, and by degrees the girl or boy will understand how to control the whole body in a perfect manner, each and every muscle hardening and enlarging to its full development. If this form of physical education is carried out from infancy, at sixteen years old a girl or boy ought to be fit to take up any game they may have a fancy for, reaping the great good that certainly may be got from games and equally avoiding the great harm.

BEAUTY

TO instil a love of beauty into a child's mind at the commencement of its life is not necessary, as normal children will always hold out their hands and seek to draw towards them all that is beautiful, instinctively turning away and shrinking from the hideous and grotesque. But what is necessary is to foster, protect, and encourage this natural gift, and it is only too evident that this necessity is not only neglected, but that the love of the hideous and grotesque is actually forced into the minds of the young, and the growth of that love helped on in every possible way. There are many who scoff at the belief that the love and true realisation of all beauty ought to be one of the most serious

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sides in the education of the young, but I think it would behove them to give a few hours' serious consideration to the subject, before dismissing it with one of the contemptuous laughs that are so freely given by the people who have never taken the trouble to probe very deeply into any new effort or idea that may come their way. Not that the idea of instilling the love and understanding of beauty into the young is a new one, as in ancient Greece it was a recognised part of all education, but most certainly for many and many a generation it has never been given a thought to, except in isolated cases. I do not think it would be a waste of time if some of our best brains at the head of things would give some serious consideration from a purely common-sense point of view, as to whether it may not stand within the bounds of reason that a very large part of the decadence, vice, and educational failure is not largely due to the entire lack in that education of any effort being made to teach

BEAUTY

the difference between the ugly and the beautiful.

Sin and vice are strangely like unto ugliness and repulsiveness. Equally, cleanliness and culture of mind, body, and spirit are not mean reflectors of the beautiful. It is not difficult to realise that perhaps the neglect of teaching the one has a good deal to do with the existence of the other. That a most drastic change in this direction would be greatly for the benefit of all children I most firmly believe. The richest and the poorest ought to have the same chance of being allowed to keep that wonderful gift, a love of beauty, which is a heritage to all, and not to have it snatched away only to be replaced by that which will cause them to go mentally blind through life, missing all the joy which comes to those who can see with undimmed eyes the wonders that God has placed in the world for all.

A love of the obviously beautiful I do not think is of any great help or value, though naturally better than entire blind-

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ness: to only admire what, so to speak, shrieks its beauty at you, takes no great understanding or discrimination. Neither does it take great powers of observation. Stone-blindness would have to be the portion of the man who was not more or less impressed by the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls. But to see and rejoice over little pools with the light throwing different shadows, a drop of dew hanging on a blade of grass, or a myriad other miniature miracles, which happen around us day and night, takes a power of observation and realisation that lies only in the human being who has had his eye trained to observe and his mind to feel and rejoice in all beauty, whether it be great or small, the largely obvious or that which requires careful looking for.

It cannot be denied that a power of observation is of great value in all walks of life; allied to a powerful memory it is of still greater value. Both of these can be taught to a great extent by encouraging the

BEAUTY

children in their love of the beautiful, which ought to be commenced in the observation and understanding of God's work in Nature. The millions of beautiful things by which He has surrounded us are generally entirely unnoticed and ignored by the average child, and the wonderful reading of that book of Nature He has laid before us to instruct and help, is indeed a closed book except to the very few. That Nature-study is taught in many schools I am fully aware, but it is taught as a rule in a purely scientific manner, which at once does away with any chance of establishing high ideals by its help. Flowers are pulled to pieces, their growth and formation explained; a drop of water is taken, placed under a microscope, and the germs in it pointed out. That this is excellent and ought to be known and understood by all, I do not for a moment deny, but its place is secondary; God's unspoken lesson of beauty in Nature is surely a far greater one than what man has found out about His work, and if this is the

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case, it seems to me that the first lesson of all that ought to be taught to the young is to look for and find all the beauties expressed in Nature. The colours and the scent of the flowers, the way they group themselves, the fashion in which they turn and seek the sun; to hear the music in the streams composed of a hundred different notes, to lie and watch the many changing lights and colours on running waters, to love the reflections in the pools and to learn to wander in that children's second land 'under the water,' or to watch in breathless wonder the ripple of the soft summer breezes across that dry land-sea, the bit of rough ground with tall grasses of many kinds in full bloom; some almost pigeon-blood in colour, others pure gold. To hear the voices of the wood-people complaining as the wind-god moving through the trees disturbs them, or in his anger storms along on wintry days and nights, calling out in his wrath to the thunder and lightning to come and join him on his noisy way. All idealistic and fanciful, no doubt.

BEAUTY

But who will deny that the man or woman who can see and hear clearly the voices of Nature, and who has the power to weave happy, harmless fancies, is not a better and more pure-minded person than one who outside of his own profession can neither see nor hear, and if placed apart from that profession is helpless and miserably bored. If unhappiness comes to him in his chosen work, he knows not where to seek help and distraction in a clean and healthy way. It has often been said that Mother Nature is a great healer: she most certainly is when we are given a chance of finding and knowing her, but to the average human being her existence may be known of, but the way of reaching her healing touch is a road carefully guarded, and hidden away out of sight, except to the adventurous few who have strength of mind to struggle on against all difficulties and seek her for themselves.

Surely we have no right not to lay open to the best of our abilities this road of happiness and comfort to all children; to

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shut them out into a materialistic darkness of mind, to crush that love of beauty that God has thought right to instil into every infant mind. Instead, there are a great many parents and teachers banded together with one object, that being to destroy and stamp out any love of beauty that may peep out from a child's mind, to uproot it and there plant instead a million growths of rank and ugly thoughts all overshadowed by one great primary planted tree whose name is the love of the ugly and grotesque; from it branches another smaller tree called the power of being able only to see the bad; creeping up this is the worm of blindness to all God's teaching of Nature. A truly terrible garden indeed, and apt to bear fruit plentifully now and afterwards.

I went to one of London's largest toy-shops the other day and there bought some toys which can be seen in the following photograph. I was told that they were very popular, and it is difficult to believe that sane people can give their children toys of

GROTESQUE TOYS



BEAUTY

this kind, and not realise in any way the irreparable harm they are doing to their minds, particularly as most small infants will turn shuddering from this ugliness presented to them, but are coaxed into thinking they like these hideous things, until they really do come to take a pleasure in them. So the first great lesson of man's teaching is learnt, taken into your heart and mind the ugly and repulsive thought and thing that God tells you instinctively to turn from and beware of. A few years of this teaching and God's voice of instinct grows dim and at last ceases. So we wilfully and of our own accord strike out of our children's lives one great help and safeguard, instead of aiding them to develop and strengthen it, so as to get all the joy and happiness possible from this great gift.

It may be agreed that a love of beauty has brought many a man and woman to sin, and it is true that such a love superficial and untrained, may well do so.

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But that love, trained and instilled into the human mind along with a deep and reverent understanding, can only be of the greatest help and benefit. In this case the beauty and purity of the soul, and that wondrous temple, the human body, would prove too strong a responsibility to allow the mind to smirch them with sin and vice. In advocating that children should be taught to see Nature's works with clear eyes, I do not mean that the many wonderful and beautiful works of Man should be ignored: only with God's works we can roam amongst them, knowing that what they teach can only be good; with Men's we must walk warily, picking out for the help of the young only those things that speak of fine and pure intention, and that can start no train of impure thought. Of the greatest influence for good, I put the sculpture of the ancient Greeks foremost: it cannot be studied too much by the young; the more it is loved and understood the more lessons it teaches, a deep and wide sense of extreme quietness

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and nobility, an understanding and reverence in the truest sense of the word for the beauty of the human body, to mar or ill-treat which was a sin against all that was highest in them. A great patience and an almost superhuman effort and striving towards all that was greatest and best, a reaching out of mind and soul to do honour to Him who made them ; what matter if their gods were many, the effort and the reverence were the same, and as such will surely be recorded.

Will ever a quarter be understood as to what we owe these ancient masters of art, the help they have been to thousands in their gentle and sincere teaching—only thousands, alas ! for of the millions of people reared and taught in our country, it is the few who find out by accident or design the beauties and wonders of their works ? It is true that bodies of school-children are escorted at intervals to the British Museum, where they are shown round by some one who is supposed to have a knowledge of

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the contents. Many a time have I watched the groups with a sad heart, realising how much help and joy they were missing. 'That is a statue by So-and-so, 400 B.C.,' on and on from one thing to another, merely a jumble of names and dates; no aid given to those muddled young minds towards their seeing and understanding the beauty they are gazing at; no chance given them to take in the message of purity and quietness that those great works send forth everlastingly to those who have learnt to see and hear. What good is there in knowing a list of famous names if the knowledge ceases at that, and the work that made those names famous is unknown and unrealised? The human being who feels a great humility and thankfulness before all beauty, whether God's work or Man's, says a truer and more sincere prayer than he who sits in church and parrot-like repeats long prayers to the God whose work he either knows not, or does his best to destroy.

We are told in the Bible that we are

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made in the likeness of God. It is wonderful how far we have managed to stray from it, and how determined we are that our children shall have no chance to attain to it. With studious care have we built up year by year a mass of customs and habits that successfully bar us from anything much higher in appearance than the apes some think we are descended from. Sometimes one sees a human face and body that has been strong enough to struggle into maturity unmarked and maimed in spite of Man's laws, and when we see such a one, it is with a heart full of wrath and pity that we gaze around on the crippled, hideous bodies that might be like unto gods walking, and are merely distorted shapes, breeding further shapes still more distorted, and a vista of horror is opened in the mind, and one seems to hear the cries of millions of unborn children, each generation a little more horrible to look at; with minds a little lower and more sin-filled, and with less and less hope of gaining all that has been lost. More

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lives to work out their own hell, fewer to live in Heaven.

To keep a child's mind filled with beautiful thoughts, and let their eyes see only beautiful things is, I know well, a difficult matter nowadays, since we have filled the world with hideous things and the minds of those about us with ugly thoughts, but the importance of doing so is, as I have said before, very great. It seems to me as if beautiful ideas and things have a very slight, delicate growth in the brain while it is in its early development, while the ugly and grotesque takes hold with giant roots, and once allow the latter to creep in first, it will oust all after attempts to replace it with the delicate plant of beauty. But keep the mind well stocked with all that is beautiful, and by the time the brain and body are developed, these plants will have attained to such strong and noble proportions that little fear need be felt of the others finding any space to live in and flourish.

There is a great deal of talk nowadays

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about Eugenics and theories on improving the human race. It might be well worth the experiment to try how the gospel of beauty taught in the deepest and truest sense might succeed where everything else has failed ; if we were educated to see ugliness, mental and physical, as sins of the most serious description against our Maker, whether would it not prove a very powerful help towards the uplifting of the human race from the mire in which it at present lies.

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HAVING tried to show how important is the teaching of the love of beauty to children, and how important it is during the early development of the brain to keep all that is bad and repulsive away, and only present the good and the beautiful, it may not be out of place to say a little on the subject as to the difficulty of getting teachers who have ever given these ideas a thought, and if asked to carry out one's wishes on this subject simply regard one as a harmless lunatic. A few are conscientious enough to make efforts, but even these are a hopeless failure, and for this reason, if no thought has been given during the years of training as to the necessity of

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keeping ugliness, physical and mental, from children, it is almost impossible, unless unusually gifted in self-control, to restrain one's self a hundred times an hour from doing or saying something ugly before children; also, with the best endeavours in the world, the deplorable fact remains that the great majority do not know what is ugly and what is beautiful.

Nine years ago, I started with a light heart and a happy mind to educate my eldest son in the way in which I considered all children ought to be educated: in other words only pure and good thoughts were to be instilled into his mind, and he was never to have the ugly and grotesque forced on his notice. My difficulties began with my first nurse, and they have gone on increasing through a series of nurses and governesses. That they should not understand one's ideas on the subject was not surprising, as their upbringing made these ideas a closed book to them; but what was so heart-breaking was that after hours of

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explaining and reasoning, and eventually in despair almost extorting promises that they should endeavour to speak only what was truthful and good, and that they should refrain from ugly tales and dirty ideas, it began to dawn on me that most of these people who take charge of children do not know the difference between what is good and what is bad for children to see and hear, and all the explaining in the world could not teach them: proving that unless the study of these things is undertaken in youth, it is of little use later in life to try and learn it. Some of them really tried, they genuinely wished to please me, but it was hopeless from my point of view; in fact, I was talking a strange tongue to them, and with the best endeavours they could not understand a language they had never learnt. It is certainly not my wish to decry the faithful service that nurses have given to their charges, a good deal more faithful than many mothers. But what I do want to point out is that the training of nurses

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and teachers is as a rule far from what it ought to be, and until this training is most thoroughly altered it is worse than useless to try and raise the education of children to a higher and purer level. First of all, it must be recognised that these people on whom the future of our young so largely depends ought to be the most respected and honoured amongst people, and this feeling of responsibility and honour ought to be ingrained in the minds of those who intend to enter the vocations of nursing or teaching. Not, as so often is the case, that teaching is taken up when a failure is made at other professions, and when you find in rich houses that the teachers or nurses of the children are paid considerably less than the cook or butler. Until teaching is put upon its proper pedestal and regarded as the most honoured of professions, and one not to be entered into lightly, so will education remain at its present low level.

It is constantly being said that there are so many clever women leaving our colleges

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each year, and finding it difficult to earn a livelihood: surely teaching ought to give many of them a profession in life; but until the profession is regarded rightly, as one of the most high and sacred callings, clever men and women will consider it beneath them, or only to be used as a step towards something better. Certainly, latterly, there has been some improvement in the methods of imparting knowledge to the young, but I am afraid that these methods have not always been used for the good only of the child. Too many good teachers are given to cramming infants' minds to an extent extremely harmful, only caring to produce on examination days tiny children who can repeat pages of verse and prose—in other words, at the expense of the child's health and mind, they nurture their own vanity, showing that their idea of responsibility is as lax as their knowledge of the delicate structure they undertake to build up. The ignorance of the people to whom children are entrusted on the science of Pedagogy is truly amazing.

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They know nothing about the body, and still less about the working of a child's brain. They do not know what is harmful physically, or what effect body has on brain, or *vice-versa*; they have a smattering of Physical Culture and this is used indiscriminately, and they cannot be blamed, as they have never been taught even the rudiments of a science which they ought to know thoroughly before they essay to teach. For it is, I am certain, this entire lack of knowledge as to the brain and body and the effect of one on the other, that leads to so much distress and sin, and that is such a handicap in any efforts that are made to fill the mind with only what is worth while. Excellent methods such as Dr. Montessori's are terribly hampered by the difficulty of finding people in any quantity capable of carrying out ideas which require careful observation and a real knowledge of the child's mind and body. They may earnestly strive, but they will fail, and consequently many good methods brought forward by

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clever trained people go to the wall and are labelled as useless, simply because the teachers are quite incompetent to either grasp or carry out any method which requires a real and not a superficial knowledge of Pedagogy.

Now this is all rather dreadful, and the only way to improve matters and give children a chance of starting life with a healthy and pure outlook is for all parents to band themselves together and insist that the people who volunteer to take charge of and educate children, shall have received a proper training both mentally and physically. If this was done, in one generation, education in the highest sense of the word would have a bright outlook, as people who have received a sane and clean education themselves will most certainly see that their children receive and benefit by the same. I do not think that parents can often give much thought as to the unlimited amount of harm done in their nurseries. The conversations that are carried on before young

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children, between nurse and nursery-maids, are five times out of six harmful, I am certain; and any observing mother can tell, from the way children behave and the things they talk about, the sort of influence that is unconsciously wielded by the nurses in charge. Looking back at my nursery days, and my memory of them is very distinct, I can easily remember the kind of topics that were discussed before me: every sort of gossip on the latest scandals, the latest murder, horrors of war, &c., all in their most gruesome details. I was, I suppose, about four or five years of age, and those conversations are clear in my memory to this day. My nurse was the dearest and most faithful of old Scotch servants, and would have given her life gladly for any of her charges, but she had never been taught herself as to what was harmful and what was not for children to see and hear, and had the uneducated person's general idea that children up to the age of about ten years are deaf, dumb, and blind. Many and

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many an evil growth and crooked outlook on life is gained in those early nursery days, and they cling steadily through life. In these days of heavy doings and light thoughts, the children of the well-to-do are more and more left in the charge of others than their parents, and it seems that this would become more so than less in the future. So, surely, a giant effort should be made towards establishing a training college, or improving the ones at present in existence, and insisting that nurses and teachers are trained so as to have considerably higher ideals than they have at present, and a far deeper knowledge of the mind and body, before they are allowed to play havoc with the lives of the young.

Most certainly there are many young people who love children, and have themselves been brought up in a clean, though perhaps limited manner: opportunities should be given to them to train so as to become able to take charge of children and to fully understand the tremendous respon-

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sibilities they undertake when children are given into their charge.

A man would be considered a great fool if he placed a valuable racehorse in the hands of an ordinary stable-man to be trained for a great race, and the horse would stand little chance to win unless handled by an experienced trainer who had made it his business for years to learn all there was to know on the subject of handling valuable animals. He would give hours of observation and thought, he would know to a hair's weight what the animal could stand physically, any mental idiosyncrasies would be studied and sought to be overcome. But the average person who has charge of children as a rule not only does not know even the anatomy of the child, but the formation of its mind and the proper way of training that mind, and bringing it to a full and perfect development, is often not even considered a matter of importance. I do not wish to imply that these people are purposely negligent of their duties, I merely

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wish to point out that the large majority do not realise or understand, from their imperfect training, either duties or responsibilities, the idea being very often that children will turn out good or bad men or women quite independently of their upbringing and the influence brought to bear on them during the early years of their development.

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FOR many years I have been a most ardent admirer of Miss Isadora Duncan, and there is no doubt that in the revival of classical barefooted dancing she stands out with great brilliancy. All praise is due to her as a creator of this school of dancing, and those amongst us who seek to follow in her footsteps do so, I fear, but feebly. I think I am right in saying that all the sincere classical dancers wish to forward this school, not merely from the point of view of making money on the stage, but from the educational value they feel it ought to hold in the upbringing of all children of both sexes. And that this value is very great has been proved as much as such a

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young movement can be proved by Miss Duncan, M. Jacque Dalcroze, and others. Though, of course, the eurhythmics of Jacque Dalcroze is a system of training entirely different in method from that of any one else.

One of the greatest advantages that classical dancing holds over the toe-dancing school is that it is possible to become proficient in it by giving a short time daily to its practice, instead of the many hours and years of arduous work that a toe-dancer has to go through before becoming a finished exponent of the art. One is an accomplishment that we all ought to be able to enjoy, the other is only possible for the woman who means to make it a profession, and give the best years of her life to it. Though to become a good classical dancer it is not only necessary to take a child and instruct it in the art of moving gracefully if the rest of its education does not assist in the teaching. From earliest infancy it must be taught to observe, to concentrate, to realise the beau-

MISS ISADORA DUNCAN

From a Photograph by the Dover Street Studios





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beautiful in line and colour, and to have the ugly and repulsive kept away from it, encouraged to copy beautiful poses and eventually express to music in movement what that music says to it. The educational value of classical dancing is that its expression has to come from within. A toe-dancer is very often merely a brilliant machine. Her dance is often composed for her by her professors, and her well-trained muscles merely respond like a perfect machine to their commands. It therefore follows that the educational value in such dances is practically nil, apart from the dancers having had to learn muscle - control, patience, and endurance, which of course is of use. A child trained to classical dancing in the right way will, by the time it reaches full growth, dance, I feel sure, as we were all meant to dance, every muscle in control and the mind enveloped in the glory of expressing beauty by perfect rhythmical movements. Having worked on the stage as a classical dancer for a short time I was a good deal

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saddened by the adverse criticisms I heard on all sides, about the bare-footed school of dancing: general sameness and general dullness were the two most severe. My own dancing being criticised I did not mind. I was merely a beginner, and beginners nearly always have to suffer. I asked many and various people as to the reasons of these criticisms and always got the same answer: 'Very pretty, yes, but when it is seen once, that is sufficient. Interesting, I dare say, to painters and sculptors who know when a pose is pure and a faithful copy of the antique, but the general public don't, and all the poses and dances look much alike.'

At that time I used to get angry, and salved my wounded feelings by putting these people down as narrow-minded and inartistic, but at the bottom of my heart I felt that they had some right on their side. I went several times to see classical dancing which was supposed to be good, and tried fairly with an open mind to criticise it. After a good deal of sincere study and thought on

MADILLE ADELINE GENÉE

From a Photograph by the Dover Street Studios





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the subject I came to the conclusion that to a great extent these criticisms were right. What was lacking I was sure was the absence of any real joyousness and life in the dancing. The dancers did their best, but with the exception of Miss Duncan's work, which carries a splendid joyousness in it, the dancing was curiously dead and heavy. The poses were good, the arms and body graceful and trained, but the legs and feet of most of them were totally untrained, the muscles soft and flabby, thus causing every movement to be devoid of life. In fact, an exact antithesis to the toe-dancer, who very often has wonderfully trained legs and a great rigidity of arms and body. The Russian dancers have to a great extent got away from this very ugly style.

Many contend that the ancient Greek dancers, whom the present-day classical dancers try to copy, did not train their legs for dancing, but merely used them as supports for the body and arms, to which all the graceful movements were confined.

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Personally, I feel sure that the Greeks if they trained their bodies and arms for the dance did not neglect the legs and feet, as they were known to insist most strongly in their physical education on perfect muscular development throughout the body.

Then came to me the problem which I have attempted to solve during the last three years. Is it possible to combine Greek poses, graceful body movements, and plastic light movements of the legs, so that the whole may be welded and work smoothly together. In fact, to try and resemble the Russian dancers in their lightness and charm, but avoiding the tortuous and unnatural movements and positions favoured by the toe-dancer. I felt sure that a great deal of the lightness of the toe-dancer's work could be brought with great advantage into the classical dancer's, and still lose none of the simplicity and purity which is the barefooted dancer's ideal, rather in fact add to it, as it is quite unnatural to have heavy, uncontrolled muscles. This can be proved by

MADAME KARSAVINA

From a Photograph by the Dover Street Studios



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watching the dancing of savages, whose movements may be grotesque, but every muscle is under control, and each movement sure. The answer to all this by many would be that it is only necessary to remove the tights, shoes, and ballet-skirt from any of the leading toe-dancers, replace them by a Greek drapery, and you will have a perfect classical dancer: for many of the Russians have shown that they have studied a certain amount of this work as far as poses go in some of their ballets—‘Narcissus,’ for instance. But there are several insuperable objections to this, one of the foremost being that an experienced toe-dancer’s bare foot is nearly always a thing of horror to look at. Secondly, a toe-dancer gets all her positions with her foot pointed as stiffly as possible, and her foot when not on the ground is never otherwise than pointed. A bare foot pointed, even a well-shaped bare foot, is an extremely ugly thing. A toe-dancer’s foot has at all times to be rigid. She gets her muscular control from the rigid foot upwards,

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and it would be an unheard-of fault for a toe-dancer to allow her foot to become limp at any moment while dancing. Again, a classical dancer must have her bare feet limp exactly like her hands : the greatest difficulty I found was to keep the feet limp and get the muscular control in the legs, also not to let the feet look dead. All dancers have to conquer this difficulty in their hands when learning to dance. A limp hand and a dead-looking hand are two very different things. I have worked hard for three years at what I think I am justified in calling a new form of bare-foot dancing. I make no pretence of having perfected it, but I hope it is a step in the right direction towards dancing that shall be perfect in pose and expression, and that will help the human mind and body to retain its birthright of beauty.

BAREFOOTED DANCING AFTER THE GREEK STYLE

From a Photograph by the White Studios



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BAREFOOTED DANCING AFTER THE GREEK STYLE

From a Photograph by the White Studios



SWIMMING

IF asked which style of physical exercise I should recommend to bring nearly all the greater muscles of the body into play, and be of all-round value to the exerciser, I should unhesitatingly say swimming—and it is with a good deal of pleasure one notices how greatly on the increase the learning of swimming is amongst well-to-do people, and that parents are beginning dimly to realise what an incalculable amount of good children of both sexes gather from this exercise. Having seriously studied swimming and diving since I was fourteen years old, I feel that I am at liberty to speak strongly on the subject; of the good that can be got from indulging in one of the

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most pleasurable physical exercises there are, and also the harm that can result from bad teaching, &c.

Having been a member of the Bath Club, London, since it first opened, I have had every opportunity of studying swimming and the people who swim—and there is no doubt that the Club has done an enormous lot to encourage learning swimming amongst the rich and their children, particularly the latter, averaging in age from three years old and upwards; also, of course, I have swum and watched swimming in many other countries and baths. An interesting thing is that most of the men anyway who swim seriously, going in for competitions, exhibitions, &c., are gleaned from the working classes, not from the idle rich, who one would imagine have far more time and opportunity to perfect themselves. But the art of swimming and diving is curiously little excelled in by the latter. They of course know how to swim, as that is taught at most public schools—but few get any further, the

ENGLISH POSITION IN AIR WHILE DIVING



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real swimming world being composed nearly entirely of hard-working men. This, of course, refers to England. When I first began swimming it was thought quite out of the common to take an interest in this exercise, and women who swam, amongst one's friends, could be counted on the fingers of one's hand. As to high diving, that was looked at in horror and amazement.

Then the Swedish divers came to London and gave exhibitions of high diving; and people began to realise that there might be something worth while in this art beyond the ordinary flopping-along breast-stroke through the water, which was about as much as the average woman, anyhow, dared to try. Swimming clubs for both sexes began to crop up, competitions were started, prizes given—and the standard rose by degrees to what it is now. Not high enough, by any means, but an enormous improvement on fifteen years ago. I personally think that what makes the Swedish divers stand out as a rule head and shoulders above

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any other divers is their marvellous realisation of form in their work, and to define what one means by form is almost impossible. Some will say a diver with a great deal of finish has good form, personally I think it quite possible to be an absolutely finished diver and yet lack a great deal in form. It seems to me that the great dash and boldness and muscular control the Swedes exhibit in the air has a great deal to do with it. One of the above qualities is often seen, but all three together seems almost unique to the Swedish divers.

Perhaps it may be interesting to mention the difference between a plain English dive and a plain Swedish dive. As regards the positions—the English dive is taken with the hands pointed straight up above the head, from the tips of the fingers to the end of the toes the body ought to be in a straight line. The Swedish plain dive is the swallow dive, so called from the position of the hands and arms out from the shoulders at almost right angles. During the flight

SWEDISH SWALLOW DIVE



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through the air the back is hollowed as much as possible. A man doing a high running swallow dive greatly resembles a bird swooping down, and the beauty of line that the best divers manage to get into it is remarkable.

Of course the muscular development and control needed in high diving is very great—therefore making it a most valuable exercise. A really good high dive and perfectly developed and controlled muscles are bound to go together.

I think that the beauty in the art of diving is greatly under-valued, and gracefulness not nearly enough insisted on in the teaching of it; like all other physical exercises unless fitness and beauty of the body are the aim of the exerciser, they ought to be left alone, little good will certainly be gathered from any form of exercise if it is entered into merely in the spirit of competition, and not with the wish to improve the body and the mind. Most exercises of a vigorous kind will help a person mentally;

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for instance, the mind would have to be a seething mass of corruption if it was past being helped by the contact and feel of cold water after a rush through the air from a height; unclean and impure thoughts that crowd gaily and with little shame under the electric lights in a crowded restaurant would not venture to show themselves when the body is tingling and the mind rioting with joy from a swift rush through the sunlit air into a still pool in a river, or even into the green depths of a swimming-bath. No ; exercise aided by cold clean water and fresh air do not walk hand in hand with uncleanliness of spirit, and if only this was more understood and realised by parents, how much unhappiness and peril might be saved their children. As to the teaching of children—swimming ought to be taught to all and taught in the right spirit—not regarded as a means to clutch a gold medal from some less fortunate brother or sister, but a glorious means of helping themselves mentally and physically, and an

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exercise that ought to be put within the reach of rich and poor; and, I feel most strongly, taught, as all physical exercises should be taught, to man and woman, as a weapon to combat through life temptations and sorrows which come to all on life's journey. It is only necessary to watch small children splash about in pool or bath to understand what great joy can be given them and in a very easy manner. Taught and helped they make marvellous progress and even the quite small ones will strive to perfect themselves in stroke or dive—also love of the water seems to breed good temper and good fellowship, therefore surely that love is to be encouraged. As to the harm that can be got from swimming I think it is the same that can be found in any exercise that is practised in a harmful manner. Overstrain is particularly liable in children who are allowed and encouraged to race each other until their hearts are bumping, which also leads to bad swimming. I am sure no serious racing ought to be

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allowed to the young until the strokes are sure and perfect.

Again, children, in baths especially, are allowed to stay in far too long. No time limit can be given, I know, as one child can stay in the water a great deal longer than another, but constantly one sees children blue with cold and exhaustion, and when they are taken out of the water only too often parents and teachers hurry them off to stand under a hot shower-bath or, a still worse evil, take them into the the hot room of a Turkish bath to get warmed up, consequently an overtired, flushed child is the result, instead of a happy, brisk, and refreshed one. Less time in the water, and, if cold, a few exercises or a romp to warm up after, will be far more successful and also stop the plaint which is often dinned into our ears—‘Such a pity my child can’t learn to swim, but she or he always catches cold afterwards.’

Small children can learn, apart from the ordinary breast and side strokes, all the so-called fancy work in the water, of which

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there are many different varieties—all of them being a great aid to gracefulness and sureness, and delighting children as well as grown-up people. Personally I am no believer in high diving for young children, as the muscles are seldom either strong or controlled enough to make a fair certainty of the dive being a good one, and if it isn't I do not think it is good for a small child to hit the water in the wrong position.

They certainly ought to learn to dive and to dive well, but not from more than a ten-feet board—until they can really make a certainty of a good clean dive from that height. I mention this as often one sees ambitious parents urging on their children to dive from a thirteen or fourteen feet board, when they cannot properly dive from three feet. Of course a good teacher will not permit this, but good teachers are few. Grown-up people also often make the same mistake, and go falling off high boards long before they can dive from a low one. Also in the minds of non-swimmers or divers

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there seems to exist the curious belief that high diving is a gift. I have often been met with reproachful looks after a dive, and the words, 'I really don't know how you do it, it is *quite* wonderful; and you know I have tried and I can't spring a bit like you can; isn't it a shame!' When answered somewhat prosaically that it has taken fourteen years of hard practice to acquire that spring, and that it is necessary to have the muscles developed in the legs and body before it is possible to dive at all with any skill, watch the non-swimmer's mouth and you will see the one word 'liar' forming silently thereon!

These are a type who appear in swimming-baths and stand about on the edge rarely venturing into the water, and, when they do, struggle about in a half-drowned condition, believing that to show any muscle or knowledge of swimming is to be thoroughly ungraceful—if not hopelessly vulgar. They also have another trying habit, and that is of paddling feebly round in circles always just on the spot where the divers from the

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high boards must enter the water. When the frantic instructor tries to explain the situation, they stare wildly round the edge, but nothing will ever induce them to look up to where the danger comes from. More than once I have become weak from laughter, standing on a high board watching the instructor and paddler—also when eventually the whole bath starts shouting at them and they are removed, it is a certainty that in a sort of hypnotised condition they will be back in the same spot shortly.

There is also another type very prevalent at swimming-baths, as I know for my sins, and these are women who come and stand about on the edge of the baths, for what reason I never could discover, unless it is to talk, but it seems a damp and uncomfortable spot for indulging in conversation. They always stand with their backs to the water, and seem to be absolutely unconscious of both bath and swimmers. It does not the least matter that there may be the most convenient balcony with comfortable chairs

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provided for those who wish to watch the swimming, not at all—nothing short of violence will move them, and if there is a low diving-board handy, they always stand on it. Polite remarks such as, 'I wish to dive, please,' or 'Please I want the board,' uttered in a beseeching fashion, has no effect whatever. For years I treated these people with politeness, but eventually my temper broke, with excellent results, and I have now adopted a way which is instantaneously effective, and I offer the suggestion with great pleasure to any of my fellow-swimmers who have suffered in the same manner. Here it is—brush past them heavily once or twice so that they get thoroughly wet, if that is not effective run lightly up behind and shout '*Board!*' with all the strength your lungs are capable of, that will generally cause them to jump several feet into the air, and while their nerves are still trembling place them in the hands of an attendant to conduct to the aforesaid balcony!

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It is extraordinary how keen people get about swimming even when they have taken it up quite late in life—I know several who swim regularly, and work away at diving with the greatest diligence, and it is much to their credit, as learning diving after you are full grown is a most painful exercise, and if you are well on in years and heavy I should have thought doubly so—and one would have imagined not a very healthy exercise, but I know one or two women who are well past middle age who have only the last year or two taken up swimming and diving, and they seem to benefit greatly by it. I think it a very great question as to whether giving swimming-baths to the very poor is an advantage or not—I do not mean for a moment that they ought not to have swimming-baths and also learn to swim, but done as things are at present with insufficient instruction, and water that is changed only once or twice a week, the risk of infection is great. If people who do not wash regularly use swimming-baths, and a bath with soap is

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not made compulsory before entering the public water, then running water through the bath ought to be the alternative.

Let me once more urge parents to have their children taught to swim, in the proper fashion, and with the proper ideas as to its value and place in life, for there is no better sport or exercise than swimming and diving to instil in a child's mind purity and self-control, and drive away that present-day great usurper of the mind, uncleanness of thought, the beginnings of which, alas! can sometimes nowadays be seen in even the quite young.

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NOWADAYS it is the fashion for the wealthy young man about town to go to India or Africa to hunt big game. So it may be of interest to discuss a little this big game shooting from an educational point of view--which point of view had not arisen, and of which there was no need, before or during the last generation. But, alas! different times and different men have turned hunting into a mere pastime of the lowest kind--into an excuse for killing in an unsportsmanlike fashion, to be used as a sop for a feeble, decadent vanity.

Such mighty hunters as Mr. Selous and the late Captain Gordon Cumming made it possible only to honour and respect in every way such men, who hunted in a clean, hard,

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fearless manner, spending their lives and caring little of the way they risked them, so long as the task set was accomplished. There was no necessity then to question as to the sportsmanlike manner in which big game was hunted. It is more than a pity that the same cannot be said at the present day.

In imagination one sees the many mighty hunters of bygone days: the men who laboured and sweated in Africa during the time when elephant ivory was a paying game. The years of hardship, of carrying one's life in one's hand—the only thing that kept death away, an antiquated rifle that took a minute to load—these were men to whose memory all real sportsmen must doff their hats and bend their heads in reverence.

One or two are still left to us, and written on their faces is the story of the lives they have led—a story clean and fine to read—eyes that look out with no shiftless look, bright and clear as steel; firm lips

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that have suffered, perhaps, but have never trembled from fear; lines drawn plentifully by the sun-god, but each line shaped by a wholesome thought. No sagging lines of self-indulgence in these faces; even if they had their merry roystering times on their few returns to civilisation, they wiped out the marks by the months of arduous and self-denying living which they spent hunting. Some to make money, others because they had been born hunters and would continue to hunt until the Most Mighty of all Hunters stretched forth His hand and claimed them in their turn.

Sportsmen these in the greatest sense of the word. Turn in your graves, ye who have passed on! Or, rather, let us pray that it is denied to you to see the men and methods that follow so feebly in your footsteps.

Let me try and compare the going forth to hunt of a rich young man of the present day, and one of these old hunters. The rich young man starts, say, from Mombasa—it is the pet place of rich young men, as it is

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easily got at, and a non-feverish hunting-ground can be reached with little trouble. He, the rich young man, is quite often accompanied by a professional white hunter, who takes all trouble from off his shoulders, engages his men, runs the whole outfit for him, and generally acts as male nurse to the rich young man, seeing that he does not run his valuable head anywhere in the direction that danger might lurk. He is, as a rule, a first-class shot, so if his charge misses or maims a dangerous animal, he can always rectify matters. In fact, he sets the scene, writes the play, acts as audience, and the rich young man plays the chief part, and the whole thing as much resembles real big game hunting as the theatre resembles real life.

Of course the running of the caravan is in itself no light work, as the rich young man would find it terribly uncomfortable to travel with less than sixty or ninety men, there are so many things to carry, tents, chairs of different kinds to rest the aching

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back, tables, dozens of plates, spoons, forks, and knives, beds, a mosquito-room to dine in, champagne to restore the rich young man after his fatiguing day, two or three portmanteaus of clothes—he might get fever if he did not change constantly, and to sit about in sweaty clothes is very dangerous he has heard—and then, my God! he might die, if he hasn't brought a doctor with him this time: he most certainly will if he ventures back into Africa again.

The above may seem exaggerated, but I can most sincerely assure my readers that it is not. It is merely the modern young man's idea of sport.

Bah! let me take a deep, clean breath, and get back to talking about the real men, the hunters of old whom we can respect and look up to, and feel glad that sometimes they will let us sit at their feet, and learn from them a little of the wisdom they have massed together during years of solitary travel. They are always quite modest men, putting little value on their brave deeds,

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regarding it all in the day's work—though sometimes their eyes will sparkle as they tell of some great adventure in bygone days. For it is near to their hearts, this life of wandering, and they would lead no other. To do an unfair or cowardly act would be an impossibility to these men, they are just good sportsmen, and they want no fairer name.

How different their hunting ! One or two men would carry all they needed for months of travel ; no stock of tinned food here, they ate what they killed, and if they killed nothing, went without. A little flour and rice, a knife, a spoon, perhaps a fork !—it was not a necessity, so why take it ? A small tent, a few odds-and-ends, a couple of shirts. Everything worked down to the lowest limit. Not how much can we take—the new gospel—but how much can we do without, and they did without most things. They were there to hunt to the best of their ability, not to coddle their bodies ; they would have been ashamed to do that at any time, as coddled bodies and clean souls do not as a rule go

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together, and these men were essentially clean-souled.

Yes, they were out to hunt big game—man against beast—teeth and claws against rifle—fair and square we met him and the best of us won. Sometimes they died of fever, sometimes they were killed by the animals they hunted—but one thing may be a certainty, and that is that each and all who met his death did so fearlessly and with no repining. They had taken the chances, and if the chances were too many for them, it was all in the day's work.

How pitifully few of our modern young men will stand comparison with these old hunters—and it is in the comparing of the old with the new which brings up the question in one's mind as to whether it is not actually excessively wrong from all points of view to hunt in the manner indulged in by the man of the present day.

The question as to our right in the taking of animal life is bound, I suppose, to arise in the minds of all who have children

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to educate, and who think at all—and I personally find it one extremely hard to answer, and am fain to make a compromise, which I know is, as a rule, a great mistake: the young as a rule do not question, they hunt and take life in a purely heartless fashion, seeming to feel no doubt as to the right or the wrong of it, and while this is felt I should say hunt if—and this is a very large if—the hunting is done so that benefit for mind and body is got from it; but there is little doubt that, indulged in as it is by the rich at present, it becomes a merely degraded form of amusement. In the future, perhaps, we shall understand more clearly and realise more definitely as to whether the taking of an animal's life is wrong or not. Let me try and explain what I mean when I say sport ought only to be indulged in when of benefit to body and soul.

It seems to me the only permissible excuse for killing ought to be, firstly, for food; and secondly—by far the most important—that in the pursuit and killing

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of game, a man becomes a finer, cleaner type owing to the life he is forced to lead during that pursuit. It is a life in the open air. He has to work hard, to lead a primitive life, and generally has a chance to brush away from his mind and body the uncleanly thoughts and clothes that are fostered and imposed by civilisation. He must be independent, relying only on his own strength and skill; he must live and hunt as nearly as possible as his savage forefathers lived and hunted, and, having shaken clear of civilisation, he has time to examine his mind and generally get things into their proper perspective. He gives himself a chance to face his God and himself if he does this fairly (and a few months of a primitive, clean life will make him do it in spite of himself): he will come back from his hunting trip a better, saner, and stronger man mentally and physically than when he started, and his hunting will have provided the object necessary to encourage him to lead this kind of a life. And now we come

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back to the question, to kill or not to kill. There are certain people, but rarely young people, who can go out and lead a hard, primitive life, for the sheer love of the thing and for the good of their souls, and not need any definite object to lure them on and keep their minds busy. But the average man has travelled such a little way along the big road of thought, that he requires to have something to amuse the superficial part of his mind while he is straightening and patching his tired soul and body.

Therefore, if killing is only used as an excuse for leading a clean, healthy life, and it is done in a sportsmanlike fashion, it seems to my humble judgment better to hunt and be clean, than not hunt and be unclean. A compromise, I know, but the only one my poor judgment allows me. If sport is not undertaken to make a better man of you, nowadays, when it is not a necessity to hunt to live, then leave it alone, for it can only deteriorate and hinder. Worthless is the man who goes out hunting with

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no reason for his going beyond nurturing his personal vanity, with the desire only of bringing home so many heads and skins and showing them off to admiring relations and friends. Only too often, he cares little if the trophies were gotten in a sportsmanlike manner; he goes, accompanied by all the trappings and comforts of civilisation, everything arranged and made easy, often even to having the animals he hunts found and marked down for him. In fact, he sets forth to accomplish a series of well-arranged animal murders, and he calls it sport.

It would be truly instructive, if it were possible, to turn one of these so-called men loose in Africa out of reach of civilisation, and make him live as the real hunter of past days lived, dependent entirely on his own eyesight, skill, and endurance. I very much doubt if one week would not see him dying or dead, as from constant self-indulgence from earliest youth, and soft living of all kinds, his eyesight is rotten, his hearing is of no use whatever, and his staying power, unless bolstered up by incessant stimulants,

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does not exist at all. Unless the hunter of old had had all his senses very finely developed, he would not have got very far, and Africa would have claimed more white lives than she has already done.

The unfortunate thing is that this type of decadent young man who overruns the healthy hunting-grounds of Africa, has done, and is doing, a great deal of harm to sport. He has more money than brains and he has no self-respect whatever. Therefore he indulges in a form of sport that is no sport at all, but merely the seeking of a worn-out, unhealthy mind after amusement. He goes in for a form of vice in sport, which is a lust to kill in large numbers—how, does not in the least matter, it is the quantity that matters ; quality even does not attract him largely, rather three small heads than one good one.

Also, to be cruel is perhaps more amusing than not to be cruel. I do not think I am wrong in saying that in the old days the man who did not kill as quickly and cleanly as possible would have been called a bad

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sportsman. Boys were brought up to consider sport a very serious thing, and to be named a good sportsman more or less hall-marked you. They regarded sport very seriously, these great-grandfathers of ours, and often in a manner which would appear to us with wider interests somewhat ridiculous. But the trouble is that sport is still freely indulged in—big game hunting more than it used to be, since great distances can now be covered with ease and comfort—and the good old rules as to what made a good sportsman and what didn't, have, instead of becoming more stringent, almost ceased to exist. The high ideals which the old sportsmen kept constantly in front of them have gone, and in their place reigns a most unwholesome desire to slaughter at all costs, which has naturally led to many cruel forms of hunting that would not have been tolerated in the old days. Fair play for man and beast was the gospel of the old hunters. Amusement for the hunter is the cry nowadays, and a poor lot of human beings indulging in a very poor form of sport is the result.

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A ceaseless endeavour to kill dangerous animals, and to remain perfectly safe while doing so, is, from a sportsman's point of view, a somewhat nauseating sight. A favourite device of this sort is tying up a live animal, such as a donkey or a goat, climbing up a tree to a safe perch, and from there shooting lions, &c., which will come to devour the tie-up. The feelings of the said tie-up during the hours of waiting do not require much imagination to realise.

Hunting a lion with a pack of hounds, four or five men on ponies with rifles, is another very favourite pastime nowadays. It has its advantages in being fairly safe—for the men ; the hounds, of course, may suffer. The King of Beasts—would any one recognise him by that name, as, hunted, winded, dazed by the clamour of many hounds, he tries to make the long grass?—and, when he does make a break for the open, it does not matter if one rifle misses, or only wounds him, there are always two or three more to finish him off before he can retaliate.

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If we will not face him on our feet, man and rifle against beast and claws, would it not be more sportsmanlike to leave him alone? A pack of hounds and four or six rifles against one lion. Well it is that you mighty lion-hunters, who, unaided and badly armed, sought out and killed your lions by sheer skill and bravery, taking all chances, and only proud if the chances were against you—well it is that you have passed on; or do your spirits still haunt that land of fascination and disease, and, perchance, mourn over each great beast that is done to death by the hands of degenerate creatures, who manage to preserve their worthless lives against your mighty strength, merely by being able to entirely obliterate from their minds what the words 'good sportsmen' once meant?

It would be of some interest to know how many lions, of the many that are killed nowadays, are met face to face, one man on the ground against one lion. Not so very many, methinks. One hears so much about the number of lions killed by So-and-

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so, but the methods of killing are generally left to the imagination of the listener. I believe there have been people degraded enough even to trap lions and think no shame of it. Hardly would this be permissible even if there was a famous man-eater to be killed, unless every other sporting method had been tried and failed. Why this type of creature, who does this sort of thing and boasts of it, is not taken and given a horse-whipping, and then expelled from decent society, I know not—except that I suppose the old sense of fairness and good sportsmanship is breathing its last. I felt this very strongly when in London a short time ago, I went to see some moving pictures of big game taken in Africa. One of the pictures remains unpleasantly clear in my memory: it was that of a hyena in a trap, caught by one leg; it grovelled along on its belly, tongue out, covered with dust, in an agony of fear, and showing the hideous misery of despair to be seen only in the eyes of trapped animals; he ceased his convulsive efforts to get free for the moment,

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and he was then stirred up with sticks, so that his struggles might prove an amusing picture to be shown all over the world. It was explained during this picture that the trap was padded and could cause the animal no pain, as if pain of a wounded limb be felt or matter much to a trapped animal. It is the terrible fear, the feeling of helplessness and being at the mercy of all comers,—they who have always been free—look at their eyes; and even if they be sorely wounded, it is not pain you see there, but sheer, horrible terror, the terror of the trapped animal, a thing to stamp out quickly by a merciful death, or, better still, give it back its freedom. It was also explained that anyway it did not matter much as the hyena was a horrible animal! Fifty years ago, if moving pictures had existed and such a picture had been shown to a house full of men, women, and *children*, I feel certain that it would have been greeted with hisses instead of the applause it received, and the man who had the indecency to show such a picture would most likely have visited the

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nearest horse-pond. Trapping has been done for years, as a rule to kill vermin, but it is generally left to paid men and regarded as a disagreeable necessity. We have come to sorry times indeed when we can regard the struggles of a trapped animal as an amusing spectacle, and take no shame in letting our children see such methods of sport. It is not only in hunting dangerous game that cruelty is indulged in, for it exists still more freely in the chase of the non-dangerous kind. Little shame is felt in wounding, and allowing a wounded animal to get away to die slowly in great pain from his wound, or perhaps to be eaten by one of the greater hunting animals.

Unless a man is a perfect shot, he is bound to wound sometimes. But he ought to do his level best to find the animal and put it out of its pain. Nowadays there seems a sort of slackness about bothering to go after a wounded animal, which must come from a total want of imagination, and also from the lack of having it instilled severely into boys' minds like it used to be,

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that to wound and not to kill was something to be very much ashamed of, and that, if it had been done, it betokened a failure and a falling-off from the moral standpoint of a sportsman. When this feeling was strongly developed, men were more careful how they shot; they would not shoot at animals at a distance that five times out of six they were bound to miss or wound; they hunted more carefully, and took more pains about getting within reasonable distance before firing. The mass of stuff that goes away wounded in Africa from indiscriminate firing at long distances would make a vast total if it could be counted up. I imagine boys also used to be taught a more thorough knowledge of sport. The hunting of the animals was considered of as great an importance as the letting off of the rifle. A man was not content to have the beast found for him, and he himself led up to it, the rifle placed in his hands, and sometimes told even when to let it off! A good many of the young men of the present day would be greatly at a loss, I fear, if they had even to clean their

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rifles themselves, and to take a rifle to pieces would be a Chinese puzzle to them.

The old hunters were a mine of information on the countries they travelled in, and on the habits of the animals they hunted. The present-day man seems almost as if he were deaf and blind, so little does he know either about the animals he hunts or the countries he travels in.

Surely sport regarded merely as a means to get so many heads and skins, not caring if the lowest and most unsportsmanlike methods are used so long as so much stuff is collected, must have only the most degrading effect on the man who indulges in it.

Gone are the days when to live we had to hunt and kill. So if we now hunt at all, let it be as an excuse to be in the great open places of the world, bettering ourselves in mind and body. And let us at least try only to employ sportsmanlike methods, and to follow staunchly along the road that those mighty hunters of old marked so bravely for us.

RELIGION

IT is hardly possible to pick up a newspaper nowadays without seeing the word education heading many columns of printed matter containing the views and theories on this subject from all kinds and conditions of people and from all parts of the kingdom. Most of the newspaper discussions are generally about the more or less trivial failings on the part of our modern education, and rarely seem to make any definite effort to discuss the serious evils which exist, and owe their existence to the curious lack of reason and understanding in the rearing of our young. It seems difficult to understand how any one who has ever given the matter a moment's serious thought can fail to realise the hopelessness of the present methods of educa-

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tion, which the average child of both rich and poor has to suffer from—both during the period of that education and in their lives afterwards where the effects of it follow them to the grave.

The evils of modern education are many, and not to be eradicated in a day; but the great root of most of these evils, and that from which they all spring, is that our children are given no God to worship, or, rather, they are given a name, to which they gabble a prayer morning and night, titter at if they hear mentioned, and thoroughly abominate on Sundays on account of the boredom and discomfort inflicted on that day in His Name.

Surely it would be well worth the experiment to replace what is merely a disliked or ignored name with a real and living God in the children's minds, and I think the result would be that education would be helped farther towards a perfect and sound basis than it has ever been before.

Teach them to have something strong

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and wonderful to believe in, a reason for doing the right and avoiding the wrong, a great and splendid helping presence, a living thought, instead of a hopelessly unjust and tiresome nonentity, which at present is what He represents to the average child.

Many people are trying and trying faithfully to find out the cause of the failure in our modern education; and why, when so much money is spent, results are so disappointing. Yet it seems to occur to few that it is building on sand to try and impress upon the brain of a developing human being the right way of living and learning, and at the same time giving that human being no true reason as to why that way is more right than any other way. The extremely young will believe, perhaps, that because mother or teacher says such-and-such a thing, that it is right, but the brain a little more developed rejects an edict given with no reason behind it, and I feel most sincerely certain that until God is made into a real living and helping thought in the

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mind of the young, education will remain much where it is. From our schools and homes a stream of men and women will continue to issue forth with indifferent educations, lacking in culture, and with the lowest of ideals, who are helpless prey to the first and strongest influences that may seize on them. If the influences are for the good, all may be well; but if they be for the bad, what help or strength has ever been given in our education, mentally or physically, to assist in combating them?

Religion as it is taught to the average child is not only worse than useless, it is a blasphemy!—a strong word, I know, but a true one; take any average child, rich or poor, and mention the Almighty to him or her, and see the result: either a blank and uncomprehending stare will be the result, or an inane giggle, followed by a bored and long-suffering expression. Is not that blasphemy? Not from the child, whose fault it is not, but from the people who are responsible for that child and its upbringing.

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I have travelled in many lands, but only in English-speaking countries have I found the name of God treated with so little respect and understanding amongst the young. And yet we call ourselves Christians, the meaning of which word is followers after Christ. Children are the most reasonable of creatures, and give them really strong and beautiful reasons for everything they are asked to do, and they will cling to those reasons with the greatest of strength and faith. Surely if we could conquer our curious aversion to bringing God's name into our daily lives, except when we wish to take it in vain, it would make a wonderful difference in the rearing of our children—to try and make Him into a real and living presence, to help and strengthen in work and play, not merely a Name to be bored, frowned, and laughed at; and I feel certain education would show the most surprising results. It is indeed difficult to understand that any one can seriously believe that the manner in which religion is taught to

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children in our schools and homes can ever have any influence or be of any help to them in their future lives, still less in their work at school.

I imagine the question that might be asked is: What have the Almighty and school-work to do with each other? Personally, I think the answer is, 'Everything.' Unless the feeling of God's presence and help is made a real thing to children in the little worries, difficulties, and joys of childhood, unless they learn to turn to Him in those small trials, they are not, I think, likely when the large troubles of manhood and womanhood come along to look for help and comfort in the only direction from which it can come.

The feeling of His nearness ought never to be absent, whether it is a sum to be struggled with or a page of history to be conquered; the sum is struggled with and the page of history conquered, not because of the punishment that might occur otherwise, but because a brain has been given to

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us to be taken care of and developed to the best of our ability, and that to neglect to develop it is to show that a trust God has given us has been misplaced.

Later in life, when it is not a sum or a page of history that is our difficulty or temptation, the habit of feeling the nearness of God's presence and the responsibility to Him will surely prove a very great and real help.

Let us at least try to give our children something more than a name to hold by in their hours of darkness and trouble, and if people who 'having eyes see not and having ears hear not,' cry Idealism and Utopianism, let us take no heed, for all things are possible, even Utopia.

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